

Municipal Court Clerk

Department Description

The Franklin County Municipal Court Clerk is the legal custodian for the accurate and timely processing and safe keeping of court records and funds. Fundamental to American jurisprudence, the Clerk is the essential impartial entity in the judicial system. Where the fifteen judges dispense justice, the Clerk is required to perform the administrative tasks associated with their legal interpretations and judgments. The Clerk delivers the public services in “the people’s court” by offering information and support regarding all criminal, traffic, environmental and civil cases filed in the court. Continual services regarding the status of cases, preparing numerous dockets, processing thousands of legal documents, receipting and disbursing funds as well as processing bails are relied upon 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Law enforcement agencies, the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, attorneys, the City Attorney’s Office, the County Prosecutor and the Public Defender’s Office are just a few of the judicial agencies that rely on the Clerk’s services so that they may continue their services.

Mission

The mission of the Office of the Franklin County Municipal Court Clerk is to professionally, objectively, and enthusiastically serve our fellow citizens and the court, and to tirelessly fulfill all of our statutory mandates so that the court records have absolute integrity and all monies are vigilantly safeguarded.

We shall accomplish our mission by empowering a team of people who consistently demonstrate caring and positive attitudes which result in a noticeable dedication to help others. Our team is comprised of people who genuinely pursue high character and high competency. We are a group of diverse people who strive to create an environment that prizes individuals, and creates a highly functional office culture powered by a passion for unity which supports our entire community.

Strategic Priorities for 2005

- Continue the enhancement of service delivery by developing technological advancements in order to establish e-clerk practices, including the following:
 - **E-arrest bond** / ability for an individual to post bail on-line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 day per year.

- **E-attorney** - ability for an attorney to search their case (criminal, traffic, or civil).
 - **E-filing** - ability to file documents via Municipal Court website.
 - **E-pay** - ability for public to pay payable case (fine and court costs) on - line. This is yet another option for the public to pay their financial obligation on the case.
 - **E-search warrant** - ability for law enforcement to submit a search warrant request to a judge for review and approval.
 - **E-slating** - ability for law enforcement to submit their criminal complaints electronically through a remote kiosk connected to the Clerk's office.
 - **E-subpoena** - ability for police departments to receive subpoena for their agency and direct subpoena via e-mail to the arresting officer(s). This eliminates the paper subpoena and improves efficiency.
 - **E-ticket** - ability for law enforcement to generate ticket from the cruiser and transmit data directly to the Municipal Court.
 - **Imaging** - ability to electronically view the court docket and associated case paperwork for enhanced efficiency and effectiveness.
 - **IVR solution** - ability for public to call a toll-free number (i.e. 1-800-Ticket) to determine the cost of payable traffic tickets, and provide the option to pay by phone. In addition, this machine will be utilized for basic court and clerk information.
 - **Mail - postage solution** - ability to print to a machine that has capability to print, fold document, insert document into envelope, sort for other (same address) documents, group document insertion, sort mail for postal discount, and apply postage. Another option is to e-mail the document as an attachment when pre-approved e-mail delivery has been sanctioned.
- Continue vigilantly to collect all monies owed to the court from fines, court costs and fees, including pursuing the feasibility of establishing new programs which would include mediation, tax refund assessments through the Ohio Supreme Court, and a professional communications/call center.
 - Continue leadership initiatives to further develop deputy clerk team building, effective communications, empowerment and unity through an established committee involvement structure and open forums.

2005 Budget Issues

- The Municipal Court Clerk's 2005 general fund budget of \$9,103,418 includes funding, with an allowance for vacancies, for 151 full-time employee positions.
- Efforts to collect unpaid fines and costs will continue in 2005; however, funding for these activities was shifted to a special revenue fund created by the City Auditor in 2003 to handle fees charged for collections of delinquent amounts, resulting in an estimated savings to the general fund of \$518,215 in 2005. The Clerk estimates the total collections to approach \$1.5 million in 2005.
- The Municipal Court Clerk will continue to explore opportunities to use technology to improve service and communications to the public.
- The Municipal Court Clerk's 2005 computer fund budget of \$3,650,427 includes 12 full-time employee positions.
- The Municipal Court Clerk's 2005 computer fund budget includes significant increases in funding for supplies, professional services and equipment related to various technology projects necessary for the development of e-clerk practices. The timing and order of these projects has yet to be finalized.

Budget and Program Summary

DEPARTMENT FINANCIAL SUMMARY					
DIVISION SUMMARY	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Original Appropriation	2004 Estimated Expenditures	2005 Proposed
Municipal Court Clerk	\$ 10,797,449	\$ 10,445,173	\$ 10,623,810	\$ 10,434,153	\$ 12,753,845
TOTAL	\$ 10,797,449	\$ 10,445,173	\$ 10,623,810	\$ 10,434,153	\$ 12,753,845

DEPARTMENT SUMMARY BY CHARACTER					
MUNICIPAL CT CLERK GENERAL FUND	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Original Appropriation	2004 Estimated Expenditures	2005 Proposed
Personnel	\$ 8,249,780	\$ 8,532,348	\$ 7,635,619	\$ 8,055,994	\$ 8,214,421
Materials & Supplies	130,397	162,780	171,170	151,170	175,500
Services	256,204	174,102	749,161	649,161	713,497
Other Disbursements	1,048	-	-	-	-
Capital	7,877	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	\$ 8,645,306	\$ 8,669,230	\$ 8,555,950	\$ 8,856,325	\$ 9,103,418
MUNICIPAL CT CLERK COMPUTER FUND	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Original Appropriation	2004 Estimated Expenditures	2005 Proposed
Personnel	\$ 503,491	\$ 632,855	\$ 730,254	\$ 736,949	\$ 940,090
Materials & Supplies	193,569	357,478	415,600	157,043	583,200
Services	708,259	549,880	860,006	663,130	1,575,137
Capital	746,824	35,729	62,000	20,706	552,000
TOTAL	\$ 2,152,143	\$ 1,575,943	\$ 2,067,860	\$ 1,577,828	\$ 3,650,427

DEPARTMENT SUMMARY BY FUND					
FUND SUMMARY	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Original Appropriation	2004 Estimated Expenditures	2005 Proposed
General	\$ 8,845,306	\$ 8,869,230	\$ 8,555,950	\$ 8,856,325	\$ 9,103,418
Municipal Court Computer Fund	2,152,143	1,575,943	2,067,860	1,577,828	3,650,427
TOTAL	\$ 10,797,449	\$ 10,445,173	\$ 10,623,810	\$ 10,434,153	\$ 12,753,845

DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL SUMMARY					
DIVISION	FT/PT	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Authorized	2005 Authorized
Municipal Court Clerk	FT	172	157	172	172
	PT	-	-	-	-
Computer Fund	FT	8	10	10	12
TOTAL		180	167	182	184
*FT=Full-Time PT=Part-Time					

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Program	Mission/Description	FT	2004 Budget PT	Appropriated	FT	2005 Budget PT	Proposed
Administration	The administration division ensures the smooth operation of the seven other divisions of the Clerk's office by preparing, submitting and tracking the annual budget; interviewing, evaluating and hiring all deputy clerks; purchasing and maintaining repair of all equipment; and managing personnel and maintaining payroll records. In addition, administration oversees legal compliance with applicable statutes, rules and case law; prepares statistical reports required by law; reviews and refers cases to the appropriate authorities for collection proceedings; and evaluates, investigates and responds to inquiries by the public.	18	-	\$ 1,587,182	4	-	\$ 1,014,062
Accounting/Finance	The accounting/finance division is responsible for the collection and accounting of fines, court costs, fees and bail for criminal, environmental and traffic charges filed in the Franklin County Municipal Court. The division is also responsible for accepting and disbursing civil division funds paid to the court for costs and fees, plus judgment and garnishment amounts. The accounting/finance division processes all mail payments, prepares receipts for monies collected, distributes funds to the proper political subdivisions and parties and makes a general accounting of all monies received and disbursed in the Clerk's office.	26	-	1,445,122	22	-	1,402,755
Civil	The civil division accepts dockets and maintains records for all pleadings and motions filed in civil cases over which Franklin County Municipal Court has jurisdiction. These cases include civil actions in contract, accounts, notes, personal injury, property damage, forcible entry and detainer, replevin and attachment in amounts up to \$15,000.	31	-	1,410,023	29	-	1,621,229
Criminal/Traffic	The criminal/traffic division accepts and processes all documents related to criminal and traffic charges in which citations are issued within the jurisdiction of the Franklin County Municipal Court. In addition, the division processes and reports all applicable records to the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles. The criminal/traffic division is open to the public 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.	77	-	3,720,194	84	-	4,418,134

Office of Information Services	The office of information services supports both the Clerk and the Court with the data processing needs of all divisions. User-fee revenues from court costs and filing fees fund a growing number of technology projects. The division continues to expand the opportunities available with new technologies to reach the goals of the Clerk and Court.	10	-	2,067,860	12	-	3,650,427
Traffic Violations Bureau	The traffic violations bureau keeps records of and processes all traffic citations issued by the Columbus Police, the Ohio State Highway Patrol, the Franklin County Sheriff and other law enforcement agencies throughout Franklin County.	9	-	393,429	12	-	647,238
TOTAL		171	-	\$ 10,623,810	163	-	\$ 12,753,845